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Thesis

The Women Characters in Vergil's Works.

Submitted by

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(A.B., Boston University, 1916)

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Foreword

Since 1930 is commonly called the "Vergil Year," -- since it is the Vergil Bimillennium, I feel that any thesis drawing upon Vergil's works, is of unusual interest.

Vergil stands supreme to-day among Latin writers, because he used the Latin language with a skill which no earlier writer had equaled, except occasionally, and as it were by accident; and which later writers could only do their best to imitate. His style is enriched with the happiest reminiscences, and, at the same time, fresh with bold experiments; weighty with condensed force, and pathetic in its reserved simplicity. The music of his verse is uncloying in its varied harmony, and majestic in its stately flow. Other writers reached great excellence on different lines; but the best of which the Latin language was capable, was shown once and forever by Vergil.[I] Or, as in the closing lines of Tennyson's tribute to Vergil, "Wielder of the statliest measure ever molded by the lips of man."[II]

I - Wilkins -- Roman Literature - p. 92

II - Tennyson's: -- "To Vergil"

Women Characters in Vergil's Works

Foreword

1930..... 2,000th Anniversary of Vergil's birth.

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Introduction

I have as a subject for my thesis, "The Women Characters of Vergil's Writings;" and I confine myself to those women depicted in Vergil's best known and most important writings, namely, The Eclogues, The Georgics, and The Aeneid.

I purpose to show that in Vergil's day, women weren't far different from the women of today in their feminine traits.

From about the time of the Second Punic War, there was a continuous advance in the direction of the emancipation of women. By the time of the end of the Republic the marriage tie was often frankly disregarded, yet amid this widespread decline of morality, conspicuous examples of conjugal fidelity and nobility of character among women, were not, of course, lacking. Augustus had fully realized the dangers brought about by the general decay of morality. He endeavored to restore, by legislation, something of the old Roman Spirit. These laws aimed at making regular married life compulsory, and preventing misalliances, and at controlling divorces. Independence and wealth had caused a gradual deterioration in the morals of women of the upper classes, and led to the frivolities and scandals, so often repeatwdly dwelt on by writers of the Augustan and early Imperial age.[I]

Horace, a contemporary of Vergil, blamed the demoralization of the nation to the neglect of religion and the consequent

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I - Sandys - A Companion to Latin Studies, pp. 185-187.

1 - Sandys - A Companion to Latin Studies, pp. 135-137.

looseness of living. He censors wanton dancing, licentious living, and lack of dignity amongst women as follows:[I]

"Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
matura virgo et fingitur artibus,
iam nunc et incestos amores
de tenero meditatur ungui;

mox iuniores quaerit adulteros
inter mariti vina, neque eligit
cui donet impermissa raptim
gaudia luminibus remotis,

sed iussa coram non sine conscio
surgit marito, seu vocat institor
seu navis Hispanae magister,
dedecorum pretiosus emptor."[II]

Even before Horace and Vergil, we have an account of Cato's disapproval of the freedom allowed to women in his day, when he argued against the repeal of the Lex Oppia. This law had been passed as a war measure, and the women were anxious to get it repealed. It restricted their freedom to appear in public unescorted, and restricted the wearing of gold and fine raiment:-- "ne qua mulier plus semunciam auri haberet, neu vestimento versicolori uteretur," etc. But Cato vigorously opposed its repeal. He said: "Maiores nostri nullam ne privatam quidem rem agere feminas sine tu-

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I - Bk. III Ode VI.

II - C. L. Smith, The Odes and Epodes of Horace - pp. 192 & 193.

tore auctore voluerunt. "But now, (he continued) "omnium rerum libertatem, immo licentiam, si vere dicere volumus, desiderant." Cato was afraid the women would get beyond all control if they were given any leeway. "Immo ut quam acceptis iussistis suffragii vestris legum, quam usu tot annorum et experiendo comprobatis, hanc ut abrogetis; id est," (he explained) "ut unam tollendo legem ceteras infirmetis" ... "extemplo, simul pares esse coeperint, superiores erunt."[I]

Vergil, however, was not one to defame womankind. In his writings he seems to have placed women on a higher plane than did his contemporaries. This may be explained from the fact that his models were women of dignity in Rome. "Among the stately ladies of the imperial house -- a Livia, a Scribonia, an Octavia, perhaps a Julia, -- Vergil must have found the elements which he has fused with such mighty power -- the rich beauty, the fierce passion, the fixed resolve."[II]

Let us consider first the women of the Eclogues. These Eclogues, or Pastoral poems, are Vergil's early work, and are largely imitative of the Greek Pastorals of Theocritus -- so, as we might suppose, he is not very original in his characters, nor are they the study of a mature mind, as are the characters in the later work, - the Aeneid. The woman element of the Eclogues is chiefly the

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I - Livy's History - Bk. XXXIV, Ch. 1-4.

II - Crutwell - History of Roman Literature, p. 272.

rustic country maid, noted for her buxomness and charm as a shepherd lass.

In Eclogue I, we find the most characteristic women. These are Amaryllis and Galatea, whom Vergil contrasts, in the conversation of two shepherds, Tityrus and Meliboeus. Tityrus is singing the praises of Amaryllis, a young country girl of a beautiful, unselfish, and loving nature, -- the simple maid who wears her heart on her sleeve, and when her lover is away is melancholy, and pines for his return. Here is the type of pure devotion.

In contrast, read what he sings of his former sweetheart, Galatea:

"Libertas, quae sera tamen respexit inertem,

. . . . . .

Postquam nos Amaryllis habet, Galatea reliquit.
Namque, fatebor enim, dum me Galatea tenebat,
Nec spes libertatis erat nec cura peculi
Quamvis multa meis exiret victima seaptis
Pinguis et ingratae premeretur caseus urbi,
Non numquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat."[I]

How much he tells us of Galatea in these few words! While she ruled him, he could never save up anything with which to buy his freedom. No matter how much produce he sold in the big city, his hand was never heavy with gold upon his return, while Galatea held sway over him. With Amaryllis it is different, -- her wants are simple; and she is interested in having her lover improve his condition

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I - Bucolica, Ecloga - I, l.27-35

in life, by buying his freedom.

In Eclogue VIII we have a pretty word picture of Nysa, a description of a shepherd's earliest love affair, when he had first been smitten by a maiden's charms.

"Saepibus in nostris parvam te roscida mala-
Dux ego vester eram -- vidi cum matre legentem.
Alter ab undecimo tum me iam acceperat annus;
Iam fragiles poteram ab terra contingere ramos.
Ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!"[I]

In the latter part of this Eclogue, we have Alphesiboeus recording the charms of an enchantress, who by various rites, brings her lover Daphnis home from the town. This is the type of girl who would today be governed by all sorts of superstitions, -- even to walking downstairs backward on Hallowe'en Eve, with a mirror in her hands, held up so as to show her the face of her lover therein. This is only one of numerous feats which superstition imposes to help a maiden procure a glimpse of a future lover, etc., etc.

In other Eclogues, we have flitting pictures of loves and graces, nymphs and naiads, etc.; but mostly in extravagant terms of lofty strain, befitting such poetical flights as are indulged in by a shepherd on his pastoral pipe.

And so we come now to the Georgics, which deal not with women at all, -- the only reference I find being one, a reference as to the way a farmer's wife should spend her winter evenings:-

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I - Bucolica: Ecloga VIII, l.38-42.

"Interea longum cantu solata laborem
Arguto coniunx percurrit pectine telas,
Aut dulcis musti Vulcano decoquit umorem
Et foliis undam trepidi despumat aëni."[I]

"Ne nocturna quidem carpentes pensa puellae
Nescivere hiemem, testa cum ardente viderent
Scintillare oleum et putres concrescere fungos."[II]

These are pictures of womenfolk at work. One would not expect anything different in the Georgics, as they treat of harsh manual labor, the hardest work man has to do, -- and this is no place for woman, except as a housewife, or the farmer's daughter who has to card wool, even at night, so as to be on hand for outside work about the farm in the daytime. The old occupation of preparing wool, the typical work of the staid Roman women, did not entirely die out even in late Imperial times. So the only glimpse of woman in the Georgics is the hard working woman, for the Georgics are, in short, "as Merivale well says, directed to the glorification of labour itself as the true end of man."[III]

This brings us to the Aeneid, and here we have to consider Helen of Troy; Creüsa; Dido, and Anna; Lavinia, and her mother, Amata; and lastly Camilla.

Of Helen, Vergil says in character of Aeneas,

I - Georgicon. Liber I, l.293-296
II - Ibid. l.390-393
III - Crutwell's History of Roman Literature, p. 261.

"Iamque adeo super unus eram, cum limina Vestae
servantem et tacitam secreta in sede latentem
Tyndarida aspicio; dant clara incindia lucem
erranti passimque oculos per cuncta ferenti.
illa sibi infestos eversa ob Pergama Teucros,
et poenas Danaum et deserti coniugis iras
praemetuens, Troiae et patriae communis Erinys,
abdiderat sese, atque aris invisa sedebat."[I]

Here is a woman so base and despicable to Aeneas that he was on the point of slaying her, even though she had taken refuge at a sacred altar, and even though his code of ethics forbade his drawing his sword upon a woman. But there appeared before him and stayed his hand, his gracious mother, Venus, who chides him, and bids him return to his home, to aged Anchises, to his wife Creüsa, to his child Iulus:-

"Nate, quis indomitas tantus dolor excitat iras?
quid furis? aut quonam nostri tibi cura recessit?
non prius aspicies, ibi fessum aetate parentem
liqueris Anchisen? superet coniunxne Creusa,
Ascaniusque puer? quos omnes undique Graiae
circumerrant acies, et, ni mea cura resistat,
iam flammae tulerint inimicus et hauserit ensis,
nom tibi Tyndaridis facies invisa Lacaenae,
culpatusve Paris, divom inclementia, divom,
has evertit opes, sternitque a culmine Troiam."[II]

I - Aeneid - Bk II - lines 567-574

II - " - " II - " 594-603

So Aeneas turned from his hateful contemplation of Helen, to carry out the commands Venus set before him.

Vergil does little to the character of Helen, he simply transfers her "in toto" from Greek legend. But he seems even unfair to Helen here, for he lays all the stress upon the baser side of her character, without once touching upon the fatal curse of her beauty, which if it doesn't excuse her actions, at least explains what a terrific handicap she is laboring under.

In the Iliad, which was Vergil's model, Helen is constantly referred to as "Helen, fair among women." And even the elders of the Trojans, when they saw Helen "spake softly winged words one to the other: 'Small blame is it that Trojans and well greaved Achaians should for such a woman a long time suffer hardships; marvelously like is she to the immortal goddesses to look upon.'"[I]

Helen is the only woman character whom Vergil takes from Homer. But Vergil depicts a far different Helen from the one presented in the Iliad and Odyssey. For in Homer's account there is a graciousness and charm about Helen that makes her lovable, but Vergil does not allow her any redeeming qualities at all. In Homer's account she is humble and repentant. When Priam called to Helen, he addressed her as "dear child." His kind words made her feel a sense of unworthiness. She replied, "Reverend art

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I - Iliad in English by Lang, Leaf & Myers, p. 54, Bk.III.

thou to me, and dread, dear father of my lord, would that sore death had been my pleasure when I followed thy son hither and left my home and my kinsfolk and my daughter in her girlhood and the lovely company of mine age-fellows. But that was not so, wherefore, I pine with weeping."[I]

The same sentiment is expressed in the Odyssey when Helen says: "My heart was turned to go back again even to my home; and now at last I groaned for the blindness Aphrodite gave me when she led me thither away from mine own country."[II]

So again, when Helen refers to the time - "When you Achaeans came up under Troy with bold war in your hearts, for the sake of me, shameless woman that I was."[III]

And again in the Iliad when Hector is preparing to set off for war, Helen addresses him in gentle words: "My brother, even mine that am a dog, mischievous and abominable, would that on the day when my mother bore me at the first, an evil storm-wind had caught me away to a mountain or a billow of the loud-sounding sea where the billow might have swept me away before all these things came to pass."[IV]

Then at the end of the Iliad, in her lament over the body of Hector, she moans: "Hector, of all my brethren of Troy far dearest to my heart! Truly my lord is godlike Alexandros who brought me to Troyland -- would

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I - Iliad - p. 54 - Bk. III
II - Odyssey - p. 56 - Bk. IV
III - " - p. 52 - Bk. IV
IV - Iliad - p. 121 and 122 - Bk. VI

I - Iliad - p. 84 - Bk. III
II - Odyssey - p. 86 - Bk. IV
III - " - p. 88 - Bk. IV
IV - Iliad - p. 121 and 122 - Bk. VI

I had died ere then. For this is now the twentieth year since I went thence and am gone from my own native land, but never yet heard I evil or despiteful word from thee: nay, if any other haply upbraided me in the palace halls, whether brother or sister of thine, or brother's fair-robed wife or thy mother --but thy father is ever kind to me as he were my own -- then wouldst thou soothe such with words, and refrain them, by the gentleness of thy spirit and by thy gentle words. Therefore bewail I thee with pain at heart, and my hapless self with thee, for no more is any left in wide Troy-land to be my friend and kind to me, but all men shudder at me."[I]

But Vergil's Helen is hated for her treachery. After the death of Paris, she had married Deiphobus, yet she caused him to be slain by her treachery at the sack of Troy, to win favor for herself from her former husband Menelaus, and her Greek countrymen. In the Aeneid -- Book six -- Deiphobus appears to Aeneas in the Lower World. Deiphobus is mangled all over, his face cruelly marred. When Aeneas asks him: -

"Quis tam crudeles optavit sumere poenas?"
Cui tantum de te licuit;"[II]

Deiphobus replies: -

"Fata mea et scelus exitiale Lacaenae
his mersere malis: illa haec monumenta reliquit."

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I - Iliad - pp. 501 and 502 - Bk. XXIV

II - Aeneid - lines 501-502, Bk. 6

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"Helen bears the debased, unheroic stamp of the later Greek drama; the last spark of goodness has left her, and even Vergil's careful study of Homer seems to have had no effect in opening the poet's eyes to the gross falsification. Where Vergil does not feel obliged to create, he is, to the last degree, conventional."[I]

And so Helen is left still cowering at the altar, and Aeneas directs his course to his loved ones at home. Having returned home, his father refuses to accompany him to safety and will not leave his falling city. Then all implore him to flee to safety, and Aeneas mentions "all" by saying: "Creüsa, my wife, and Ascanius, and my whole house." This line brings out the fact that Creüsa stood with Aeneas, and seconded his wishes, and was a real helpmate to him. When Anchisis cannot be persuaded, Aeneas decided to rush into the thick of the battle and give himself up fighting. Notice Creüsa's reaction to this: -- "If it is to death you are going, then carry us with you to death and all, but if experience gives you any hope in the arms you are resuming, let your first stand be made at your home. To whom, think you, are you leaving your little Iulus -- your father, and me, who was once styled your wife?" What does she mean by those last words? Has he tired of her, so that the term "wife" does not now stir up sentiments of warm love within him? (If so,

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I - Crutwell's History of Latin Literature - p. 273

then perhaps this trait in Aeneas may throw some light on his leaving Dido so unfeelingly after he had"tired"of her.) Probably Creüsa does not now hold Aeneas by the loving ties of their early marriage. Realizing this, when she beseeches him to save them all, she mentions, first, those who have the stronger hold on him, the child, Iulus, and the aged Anchises. But, she can't forbear to remind him that she is still his wife and it is his duty to look out for her. It is the modern wife's cry, "You used to care about me."

Then when the little family does start out for Troy, Aeneas takes his father on his shoulders and leads little Ascanius by the hand, -- but the wife is "to follow their steps at a distance." Poor Creüsa!

When Aeneas speaks of their progress, he claims he is startled by every sound, fearing alike for him who holds his hand, and for him who carries, -- but the wife isn't mentioned. If he were concerned about her at all, perhaps he thought that, wife-like, she'd follow on. He didn't even miss her until they reached the coveted shelter of the mound and temple of ancient Ceres. After his return, and search of the city, the shade of Creüsa appears to him. She, still the submissive wife, informs him that it is not heaven's will for her to accompany him on his journey."And now, farewell," she cried, "and continue to love your son and mine." Again she uses the boy to remind him that she

was his wife, in the words, "your son and mine." Many a woman holds the man who has long since ceased to love her by the bond of a child, realizing that it is the only hold they have on a husband. And so it is with meek, devoted, faithful, and unhappy Creüsa.

But far the most noteworthy of all the women characters in the Aeneid is Dido. The fourth book entire of the Aeneid is given up to the love episode of Dido. In fact, Ovid tells us that no part of the Aeneid was read more than the episode of Dido.[I]

"Vergil has won the sympathies of all readers for Dido, against his chosen favourite of the gods (Aeneas) -- so well has he portrayed a woman's passion and despair."[II] "This tenderness is one secret of Vergil's perennial power..... His breadth of sympathy gives him an aspect of modernity."[III]

Dido first showed her interest in Aeneas when she welcomed the Trojans who were shipwrecked and driven to her shores. She cried out -- "The followers of Aeneas, and the City of Troy -- who can be ignorant of them? . . . . . Would to heaven your king were here, too. Aeneas himself, driven by the gale that drove you hither -- . I will send trusty messengers along the coast . . . . in case he should be shipwrecked, and wandering anywhere in forest or town." So we have presented to us the gracious queen, magnanimously offering

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I - Ovid: Tristia II l. 535 and 536
II - J. Wight Duff - A Literary History of Rome, p. 463
III - J. Wight Duff - " " " " " " 470

permanent shelter to these long harrassed,shipwrecked Athenians.

Right here at the outset, Dido betrays more than ordinary interest in Aeneas, -- she is curious to see him, -- she has heard of his eminent piety and his prowess in war, and knowing him to be a great and renowned hero, she is eager to see the man himself. She perhaps has already entertained the idea that if Aeneas could be induced to end his toil-some wanderings in the haven of her newly founded kingdom, it would mean reinforcements for her people, and a partner for her, to share the burden of ruling. For vast was the task she had set upon herself -- to found a kingdom. She might, in such a man as Aeneas, find a worthy companion with whom to share the burdens -- or even let him rule alone, for after all, a man could command, a warrior could defy his neighbors, and already she was having trouble with hostile neighbors; but for a woman ruling alone, there was little satisfaction, -- no happiness. As yet, Dido had no thought of love. It was for added protection and prestige that she offered a permanent home to the Trojans. And cried, "Urbem quam statuo, vestra est; subducite naves; Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur."[I]

All this before she had even seen Aeneas.

But when the cloud that enveloped Aeneas parted asunder, and Aeneas stood revealed, ("os humerosque deo similis" -- Aeneid I 1.589), by the aid of Venus his goddess

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I - Aeneid Bk. I ls. 573 and 574.

mother, with a face, the image of a god, and the glowing flush of youth, and beauty and gladness in his eyes, etc.; then poor Dido's doom was sealed, -- it was love at first sight for her. Aeneas added fuel to the flames by the extravagance of his greeting. He flattered her with these words: "Quae te tam laeta tulerunt saecula? qui tanti talem genuere parentes?"[I]

Dido now has added reason to lay snares for holding the Trojans as colonists or co-founders of her empire. She offers solemn sacrifices at the altars of her temples, and prepares lavish feasts for the entertainment of her guests. She glories in the sumptuousness of the regal splendor with which she can tempt Aeneas; here is wealth in abundance -- he need only accept it, she has here untold luxury and comfort to contrast with their utter destitution.

Aeneas, by custom of courtesy, must offer gifts. All the best that has been salvaged from ill-fated Troy, he now presented to the Tyrian queen. The very robes worn by unlucky Helen on her unblessed bridal flight, are now given to Dido. How far better had they been lost at sea, or devoured by the flames of Troy, for surely such garments carried a curse! But Dido was greatly flattered by the attentions of Aeneas. Her feminine heart took delight in the magnificence of his gifts. She was captivated,

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I - Aeneid Bk. I ls. 605 amd 606

too, by his little boy, Ascanius, the image of his father. This then is the second great impetus to the passion already enkindled. First, the flattery that pleased her in his words and gifts; and, secondly, a child, the tiny miniature of the great hero himself. In a woman of Dido's generosity there needs to be some outlet for the love she is longing to bestow. Moreover, her marriage had never satisfied the parental instinct, and she loved children. So there is added the hope of winning Aeneas, and keeping the boy Ascanius for her own. Since her marriage with Sychaeus had been childless, there was no bond to keep alive the memory of her former husband. She is wrapped up in this child, he becomes a means to increase her longing for a marriage with Aeneas, -- to make a home for the storm-tossed man and for the motherless child, on whom she could lavish her devotion, stored up in a heart "long unused to love."

Fate seemingly could hardly have devised a surer downfall for Dido. She was older, and more mature, and she experienced a fuller or deeper love for Aeneas than that early love she had given Sychaeus. No one else had held sway in her heart since Sychaeus' death -- so that now all her starved love-life demands restitution.

Aeneas had no thought of love. His one object was the founding of a Roman city, this his life's work, now so near of accomplishment. How natural, then, that he found

interest in surveying her newly founded kingdom! Between them is a community of interests. Each is following a destiny to found a kingdom, after having suffered much in wandering and hardship. They are brought together, too, by a common sorrow. Each has lost a loved one; he, a wife; and she, a husband. What more natural than that her heart should cry out for sympathy and love from one whose fate had been so similar to hers? She is eager to hear all about the Trojan War and Aeneas' exploits, and begs him to tell the story from the very beginning. All of Books II and III of the Aeneid are given up to an account of the Trojan War, and Dido listens, spellbound. Her technique is good, for she proves herself a good listener, and lets him do the talking. "Dido has imagination. She can understand this great, tall, and rather melancholy hero better than many of his readers have done.

'My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She loved me for the dangers I had passed.'" [I]

Book IV begins the tale of the havoc that love is stirring in Dido's breast. The image of Aeneas is ever before her, and the source of her torment is that she feels that in allowing herself to love Aeneas, she is being unfaithful to the shade of Sychaeus. "Her character is that

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I T. R. Glover: Virgil - p. 183

of a brave and loyal, a great and queenly, a pure, trusting, and compassionate nature. . The most tragic element in the development of her love for Aeneas is the struggle which it evolves with her high-strung sense of a fidelity to the dead --

"Ille meos, primus qui me sibi iunxit, amores
Abstulit: ille habeat secum, servetque sepulchro."[I]

After a wakeful night, Dido goes in the morning's early light, to her sister Anna, and confides all in her.

Vergil presents another type of woman in Anna, who is one who lives in the reflected glory of a stronger personality, who has no positive 'ego' of herself, but is the lesser satellite of some bright planet. Modern psychologists would say that Anna projected her personality onto that of anyone with whom she associated. Projection is best defined, I think, in the German term: "einfühlen." This, then, is Anna's gift, - her power to sense another's feelings as though she were experiencing the sensation herself. She can "weep with them that weep." It really is a gift, for one can only be truly sympathetic if he can sense another's emotion, and realize what that one is going through. It is somewhat the power of self-abnegation, and is a wonderful quality in a close friend, or a servant, or, as here, a sympathetic and understanding sister. Anna reacts to Dido's

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I - Bk. IV l.28 and 29 Aeneid
Sellar: The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age - pp 405 and 406.

confidence just as Dido would wish her to, offering Dido self-pity, as it were, and indulgence. Dido does not realize this. She is too wrought up. She soothes her conscience by the thought that in appealing to Anna, she is putting her problem beyond herself, that she is getting an unbiased point of view, an outsider's impression of her dilemma. Unfortunately, such was not the case.

When Dido confided her yearning for Aeneas, and her scruple that it must be smothered for decency's sake, out of respect for Sychaeus, Anna replied, "Sweet love, dearer than the light to your sister's eye, are you to pine and grieve in loneliness through life's long spring, nor know aught of a mother's joy in her children, nor of the prizes Venus gives? Think you that dead ashes, and ghosts low in the grave take this to heart?"[I] Anna then runs over the list of hostile neighbors, and the princes who have been seeking Dido's hand in marriage, to unite her kingdom with theirs; whose wrath Dido has incurred by constantly refusing each. She reminds Dido of the threats of Pygmalion, their brother, in Tyre; then, craftily, she adds, -- "What a city, my sister, will ours become before your eyes; (if you wed Aeneas), what an empire! With the arms of the Trojans at its back, to what a height will the glory of Carthage soar![II]

I Aeneid Bk. IV l.31-34 trans. by John Conington
II " " IV ".47-50 " " " "

"Anna is a Cyrenaic in her philosophy, and inclination is her guide in life. She may have asked herself why Dido has never married again, and the only reason of which she can conceive -- the only reason that could weigh with herself -- is that she had not so far wished to do it."[I]

Anna cunningly lays the stress on the side of expediency, and the good of the kingdom. What she really wants is for Dido to satisfy her heart's longings, yet, at the same time, keep peace with her scruples or conscience. Anna is like the childless woman who centers what would be parental love on another's child and spoils the child by indulging all its whims and fancies. In short, Dido reproaches Anna later on (when she realizes this) by saying,

"Tu lacrimis evicta meis."[II]

Anna tries to make things easier for Dido. Then she suggests taking the auspices, giving free course to hospitality and weaving chain of pleas for delay.[III] She gives confidence to Dido's wavering mind, and they go forthwith to make sacrifices. Dido spends much time in sacrifices and consults greedily the entrails yet quivering with life. Vergil doesn't say how the auspices came out. Probably they were favorable, and showed the benign regard of heaven, -- probably if they didn't Anna was close by to interpret them with her soothing

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I - T.B. Glover. Virgil pp. 188 and 189
II - Aeneid IV - line 548
III - " IV - 51 Trans. by Conington

logic, and maintain that the gods were on Dido's side. Anna is always an opiate. -- In the final scene when it is too late to do anything else, she is there to soothe the brow of her dying sister.

Being thus encouraged, ill-fated Dido, now in the madness of love, plainly shows its symptoms. While showing Aeneas around the town, "she starts to speak, and stops midway in the utterance."[I] She hangs upon his words again in the banquet hall; and at midnight returns to the empty hall and presses the couch where he had reclined during the banquet. At other times, she holds the boy Ascanius in her arms, spellbound by his father's image, to cheat, if she can, her ungovernable passion. For her, nothing else counts but her love. Her interest in the growing city lessens and vanishes, -- "the towers cease to rise, the works are broken and suspended." -- (Aeneid - Bk. IV, lines 88 and 89 - trans. by Conington).

"Dido, as we have seen, is a woman of some character and greatness, but her forte is action rather than reflection. Hers, after all, has been an "unexamined life," and in her hour of need, she has nothing adequate on which to fall back. She surrenders at once, and gives up her ideal for her inclination."[II]

Naturally, Aeneas gradually becomes aware of the queen's passionate regard for him. "As Aeneas lingers in Carthage, the queen's infatuation increases, and he, in some measure returns her love."[III] In reality he

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I - Aeneid, Bk. IV - l. 76, trans by Conington
II - T. R. Glover, Virgil, p. 189
III - Knapp, Vergil's Aeneid with Ovid, p. 32.

admires, but does not love. However, he is a stranger in a strange land, he is accepting extravagant hospitality, he is dazzled by the Tyrian queen's wealth, splendor and beauty, and finds it hard to resist her.

Dido has become the pursuer; Aeneas, the pursued. He falls a prey to the life of luxury, and begins to settle down in Carthage, apparently forgetful of his great "mission" in life. So the winter months are slipping by, when King Iarbas, a Moorish suitor, whom Dido had previously refused, -- enraged that another had succeeded where he had failed, -- addressed Jove, the Almighty, with bitter taunts for having allowed a foreign woman and an Eastern adventurer to scorn him, Iarbas, who had reared countless temples to Jove throughout his realm. Immediately Jove sends Mercury with commands for Aeneas to leave Carthage, and press on to the promised land of Latium. He uses the strongest incentive possible when he addresses Aeneas thus: -

"Si te nulla movet tantarum gloria rerum,
Nec super ipse tua moliris laude laborem,
Ascanium surgentem et spes heredis Juli
Respice, cui regnum Italiae Romanaque tellus
debentur."[I]

I - Aeneid - Bk. IV, lines 272-276.

This is enough -- Aeneas feels that he has given in to his own selfish desires, regardless of his boy's future welfare, and his eyes are opened to the injustice he has been doing to his son. Thereupon he rushes to atone, and prepares to sail at once, even with a winter sky threatening. He calls his leaders, and bids them to quietly prepare the fleet. Aeneas, who has followed the line of least resistance since he first landed at Carthage, is now in a difficult situation. How approach the impassioned queen? How explain? How hope to break peaceably the chain by which Dido's love has held him?

But here, as in the rest of the episode, Dido takes the initiative. She becomes aware of preparations, her suspicions are aroused, she perceives a change in Aeneas, she seeks him out and accosts him in jealous rage. She demands to know how anything, even a command from Jove, could call him from her side? She taunts him that he is leaving her to the mercy of the barbaric hordes around her which have become even more hostile in their jealousy of him; that he is responsible and should remain to protect her..... But, to no avail. Aeneas no longer now follows the line of least resistance. Whatever feeling he had had for her, "possession having cooled his love,"[I] he remains adamant to prayers, threats, and tears alike. Dido swoons..... It is more than she can bear.She

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I - Ker. Essays of John Dryden, p. 190

1 - Ker. Essays of John Dryden. p. 190

has been pampered by Anna, cherished by Sychaeus, revered by her subjects, indulged (up to now) by Aeneas, and never before had she experienced anything like this. She is helpless before it, and swoons.

Dido's misfortune was her lack of experience in love affairs. Sychaeus had won her early love, and no one else till now had won her heart. Sychaeus had treated her with all love and tenderness and respect; and she believed it would be the same with Aeneas. She had never learned how a man could regard a love affair. To her, it was her very heart and soul. To him, it was an interlude, (pleasing, to be sure), a relaxation in the storm and stress of his seven year's wanderings. Had there been nothing on his mind, he would have stayed, but. lo! the gods have beckoned, and he remembers his"mission." Someone has said that with a woman love comes first; but with a man, work comes first, and love afterwards. So it was with Aeneas, his life's work might be postponed for a little, but it could not be shelved indefinitely, and now, at a reminder from the gods, he is roused to action, and is very blunt, even brutal, in his withdrawal from Carthage. The lines, "Neque haec in foedera veni,"[I] and the following lines fell harshly upon Dido's lovesick heart. She glared at him and burst forth with imprecations and curses that would have instantly cowed a timid man, -- but to no avail.

I - Aeneid - Bk. IV, line 339

She can neither beguile nor affright him. The gods have spoken, and he is now immovable, remembering his duty to his son, in his belief that Destiny is greater than the individual, and that the individual must bow to it, or be broken by it.

Right here, as Vergil describes the continued preparations for the fleet's departure, he stops a moment in his narrative to commiserate unhappy Dido. He shows his brooding mind puzzling over the disordered lives we mortals have to live, in the words, -- "Tyrant love! What force dost thou not put upon human hearts! Again she has to resort to tears, again to use the weapons of entreaty, and bow her spirit in suppliance under love's yoke, lest she should have left aught untried, and be rushing on a needless death."[I]

Dido now lessens the demands she puts upon Aeneas, -- she asks but a little respite, a brief time to become adjusted to this strange upheaval -- he need not forego his fair Latium, he need not renew old vows, -- let him but wait for more clement weather for his voyage, and, in the meantime, give her the chance to become used to the changed condition between them. This seems like a reasonable request, but "Fate bars the way, and heaven closes the hero's relenting ears."[II] Aeneas will become

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I - Bk. IV, l.412-415, trans. by Conington.
II - Aeneid. Bk. IV, l.440, trans. by Conington

entangled no more.

Dido is like a drug addict. To effect a cure, (if possible) the doses must be gradually lessened, not stopped abruptly, but Aeneas will not listen; he cuts her off entirely, and Dido is deathly sick; she cannot rally.

Aeneas fears now that the maddened queen may take vengeance, for her passion has turned to frenzy, and to Aeneas comes the thought, --

"Notumque furens quid femina possit,"[I] - or, as a more modern poet has expressed it: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." But he misjudges Dido, for she banishes every thought of physical and immediate vengeance from her mind; -- it is merely the momentary loss of self-control, due to her madness that suggests vengeance, for she realizes that revenge could never atone for her unrequited love.

Maddened by her destiny, Dido prays for death. Her tortured mind cannot picture life without Aeneas, moreover, she is at the mercy of the barbarian hordes, she is dishonored in the eyes of her own subjects by Aeneas' departure, and she cannot bear the emptiness of life without him who had so enriched it. The happy child gone, too! No child of her own to play in the palace and make it less forlorn.

I - Ker. Essays of John Dryden, p. 192.

In pursuance of custom, Dido proceeds to make sacrifices, but the omens terrify her, -- the sacrificial wine turns to blood.

In the palace was a marble chapel, dedicated to her husband, to which she used to pay singular honors. Lately it has stood neglected. Now she resumes her duties there. In the long silences of the lonely night, a voice is heard, the accents of her dead husband calling her. Outside a dismal owl laments in mournful wailings. Her mind is completely disordered, unhinged. Added to the grief that she has lost Aeneas' love, is the terrible self-accusation and self-reproach that she has wronged her husband's memory. All combined have driven her mad. She sees no other course, she resolves to die.

Dido would not be human if she were to die without breathing a curse upon the man who had brought such misery upon her. "Her passion goes on deepening in alternations of indignation and recurring tenderness. It reaches its sublimest elevation in the prayer for vengeance, (answered long afterwards in the alarm and desolation inflicted upon Italy by the greatest of the sons of Carthage)"[I] At dawn when she sees the harbor empty, and realizes he is gone beyond any recall, then all the bitterness in her heart wells up in that curse she breathed out upon him, the curse that embroiled Roman and Carthaginian forever, -- so forcefully expressed as follows: --

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I - Sellar - The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age - p. 407

"Sol, qui terrarum flammis opera omnia lustras,
tuque harum interpres curarum et conscia Juno,
nocturnisque Hacate triviis ululata per urbes,
et Dirae ultrices, et di morentis Elissae,
accipite haec, meritumque malis advertite numen,
et nostras audite preces. Si tangere portus
infandum caput et terris adnare necesse est,
et sic fata Jovis poscunt, his terminus haeret;
at bello audacis populi vexatus et armis,
finibus extorris, complexu avulsus luli,
auxilium imploret, videatque indigna suorum
funera; nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae
tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur,
sed cadat ante diem mediaque inhumanatus harena.
haec precor; hanc covem extremam cum sanguine fundo.
tum vos, o Tyrii, stirpem et genus omne futurum
exercete odiis, cinerique haec mittite nostro
munera. Nullus amor populis, nec doedera sunto.
Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ultor,
qui face Dardanios ferroque sequare colonos,
nunc, olim, quocumque dabunt se tempore vires
litora litoribus contraria, fluctibus undas
imprecor, arma armis; pugnent ipsique nepotesque." I

I - Aeneid, Bk. IV, lines 607-629.

1 - Apocal. Sc. IV, 11ae 207-209.

While meditating death, Dido has had her funeral pyre built high to the open sky, so that if Aeneas sails away without a farewell, he at least must see the smoke and flame of her funeral pyre, and feel compunction to have caused her death. She wants his compassion, his pity, even in death; she hopes he will sorrow for the beautiful queen who slew herself with love for him. (Shakespeare wrote: -- "For men may die, and worms may eat them, but never for love." -- Not so with women).

Loving him to the last. Dido gathered up all the relics of their happiness, and placed them upon the pyre, easily persuading Sister Anna that she is merely burning things which would remind her of Aeneas, and cause her unhappiness. Then she sends Anna on a fictitious errand, and mounts the pyre, "wildered and maddened by her enormous resolve." After surveying the Trojan's garments and pausing awhile to weep, she utters these last words: -

"Dulces exuviae, dum fata deusque sinebat, accipite hanc
animam, mequi his exsolvite curis.
Vixi, et, quem dederat cursum fortuna, peregi;
et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago.
Urbem praeclaram statui; mea moenia vidi;
ultra virum, poenas inimico a fratre recepi:
felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum
numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae!
Dixit: et os inpressa toro, 'moriemur inultae,
sed moriamur,' ait, 'Sic sic iuvat ire sub umbras.

hauriat hunc oculis ignem crudelis ab alto
Dardanus, et nostrae secum ferat imina mortis.'"[I]

She spoke, and even while she was yet speaking, her attendants see her fallen on the sword, Aeneas's sword it was, too, so Dido bears out Goldsmith's lines: -

"When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray
What charm can soothe her melancholy?
What art can wash her tears away?
. . . . . .
The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
To wring his bosom is -- to die."

But, did it "wring his bosom?" In Book six of the Aeneid when Aeneas meets Dido's shade in the lower world, he does not appear prostrated, he tells her that it was against his will that he left her coast, and adds, "Nor could I have thought that my departure would bring on you such violence of grief."[II] But now Dido is mistress of the situation. No entreaties now, nay, she will not reply, nor even admit that she recognizes him, but, in an unfriendly manner, turns her glance away and flits through the grove to where

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I - Aeneid - Bk. IV, l.651-662.
II - " - " VI, l.463 and 464, trans. by Conington.

Sychaeus awaits her, and returns love for love.

I have a feeling that Vergil's tenderness of heart would not allow him to leave Dido after the dramatic episode of her death. He shows her in the lower world to let us know that there was peace and enjoyment to be gained in the life hereafter for those who atoned for their sins and were truly repentant. He wanted us to see that she had recovered from the old wound caused by Aeneas, to such a degree that she was not even willing to recognize him when he appeared there.

"Illa solo fixos oculos aversa tenebat;

. . . . . .

tandem corripiut sese, atque inimica refugit."[I]

But we do sympathize with Dido. "St. Augustine wept over Dido, 'Quia se occidit ob amorem' . . . . . Love for Aeneas after all has mastered her madness and her hatred, and it is the dominant note in her death."[II] . . . .

"Dido enlists our sympathies. It is her human frailty that brings the disaster that wrecks her life."Accident throws Aeneas in

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I - Aeneid - Bk. VI - l. 467-472

~~II - " - " IV - l. 361~~

~~III - Slater, D.A. - Sortes Vergilianae, p. 18~~

II - Glover, - Virgil, p. 202.

her way, -- he becomes to her a temptation, and she sacrifices her sense of right to her inclination."[I]

As mentioned above, "in her hour of need she has nothing adequate on which to fall back. She surrenders at once, and gives up her ideal for her inclination."[II] She merits our sympathy, for, "Of whatever mistake she is guilty, whatever the flaws of her character, she is a great woman."[III] Dido seems to realize that she was the victim of circumstances. She said: -

"Vixi, et quem diderat cursum fortuna, peregi,

. . . . . .

Felix, heu nimium felix, si litora tantum
Numquam Dardaniae tetigissent nostra carinae!"[IV]

"In the episode of Dido, - one of the most famous stories in all literature, - Vergil has not only come nearer than any ancient writer to the tone of modern romantic feeling, but he has delineated with remarkable truth and delicacy of portraiture, the character at once of a fond woman and an Oriental queen."[V] It is so magnificiently set forth that many lines defy translation.

I - T. R. Glover - Virgil, pp. 202 and 203

II - T. R. Glover - Virgil, p. 189

III - Ibid - p. 202

IV - Aeneid - Bk. IV - pp. 653-658

V - Greenough & Kittredge, Virgil, p. 317

Apollonius

It is interesting to note Vergil's occasional dependence upon the story of the Argonauts as told by Apollonius of Rhodes in the Third Century; -- especially interesting to compare the love story of Medea in Bk. III of the Apollonius with the love episode of Dido in Bk. IV of the Aeneid.

"The romantic story of Jason and Medea, of course, rises to a distant climax, and the vacillation of Medea in making up her mind provides a retarding element, but there is no real dramatic conflict, or any such dramatic progress as Vergil develops in the story of Dido . . . . . The portrayal of Medea's frenzy is thoroughly modern, though now-a-days most of such detail is relegated to rather cheap grades of fiction. It was this frankly realistic handling of love, with emphasis upon the physical effects of the disease, -- for so the Greeks regarded it, -- that Virgil found established in literary tradition when he came to write the story of Dido. His story bears no relation in theme to the third book of the Apollonius. . . . . But though Virgil's story finds no precise analogy in Medea's situation, all the details of Medea's physical suffering and torture of soul recur in Dido's experience, not that Virgil was imitating Apollonius, but simply that the Roman poet was conforming to Hellenistic methods . . . . . .

There is, however, in Virgil's use of the emotional possibilities of his narrative an individual trait. The Hellenistic poets had opened the floodgates to every variety and to the full tide of emotion. Virgil reveals in his epic a sense of propriety which is not unlike the restraint of fifth century Greek art; like the Hellenistic poet, he is sensitive to every opportunity to reveal the inner feelings of his characters, and to stir the emotions of his readers,but he eschews the grim and grewsome and prefers to excite pity and sympathy rather than horror and awe . . . . . the Greek poets lose all restraint and often betray a distinct straining for effect, a conscious effort to attract attention. So in a conventional epic description of night, endeavoring to describe the universal sleep of nature and of humanity, he (Apollonius) is not content to tell us that the dog had stopped barking, that the wayfarer and sentry were intent on sleep, but has to add that deep sleep overcame many a mother of dead children. Virgil would have omitted the gruesomely tragic adjective and suggested that even the tired mother found rest, but Apollonius is tempted to make the picture sensational."[I] Here are the lines from Virgil: -

"Nox erat, et placidum carpebant fessa soporem
Corpora per terras, silvaeque et aseva quierant
Aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu -

I - Prescott - The Development of Virgil's Art - p. 237-243.

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Aequora, cum medio volvuntur sidera lapsu -

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1 - Prescott - The Development of Virgil's Art - p. 237-243.

Cum tacet omnis ager, pecudes, pictaeque volcures,
quaeque lacus late liquidos, quaeque aspera dumis
rura tenent, somno positae sub nocte silenti."[I]

But in both instances the description of nightfall is followed by the thought that, although the whole universe is plunged in sleep, the heroine finds no relief in sleep for herself.

In Apollonius -- "But not indeed upon Medea came sweet sleep. For in her love for Aeson's son many cares kept her wakeful, etc., etc. ....." And in Vergil:--

"At non infelix animi Phoenissa, neque umquam
solvitur in somnos, oculisve aut pectore noctem accipit."[II]

In Mr. Seaton's introduction to his translation of Apollonius, he tells us that the Medea of Apollonius' is the direct precursor of the Dido of Vergil, and that it is the pathos and passion of the fourth book of the Aeneid that keep alive many a passage of Apollonius'.

It is, as Mr. Seaton says; - "Some of Apollonius' finest passages have been appropriated and improved upon by Vergil, by the divine right of superior genius."[III]
I would mention the example, just quoted,(the descriptions of nightfall,)and the comparison of Medea's curse upon Jason, with Dido's curse upon Aeneas, in which Vergil far outshines his model.

I - Aeneid - Bk. IV - Lines 522-528.
II - " - " IV - " 529-531.
III - Apollonius Rhodius - Introduction by R. C. Seaton.

In the Heroides of Ovid -- a group of letters purporting to be written by heroes and heroines of ancient times to their errant lovers, Dido is given her place along with Helen, Medea, Penelope, and Briseis. In characterizing these women through their letters, Ovid shows in every case a heart submissive to the power of love. Then he traces the effect of the malady as it reacts on each one. Helen is filled with vanity; Briseis is forgiving; Penelope is faithful; but Dido is filled with despair. Ovid takes the keynote of Vergil's story of Dido, and interweaves the reproaches of Dido through her despair and lament of an unkind Fate; - and her entreaty for Aeneas to grant her a little time in which to grow calm, and learn to bear his indifference: -

"Dum freta mitescunt et amor, dum tempore et usu
fortiter edisco tristia posse pati."[I]

These letters, in the form of poems, are artificial, to be sure, but engage our interest by the charming quality of Ovid's inventive genius, -- in that he follows the original stories close enough to make them seem real, and win sympathy from his readers for the wounded and suffering hearts that dictate them.

And now let us consider the remaining women characters in the last six books of the Aeneid. Dryden's observation

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I - Ovid - The Heriodes -- Letter 7 - Lines 179, 180.

will show us that there isn't much more of the love element to be looked for in the remaining books. He writes, "Love was the theme of his Fourth book; and, though it is the shortest in the Aeneid, yet there he has given its (Love's) beginning, its progress, its traverses, and its conclusion, and had exhausted so entirely this subject,that he could resume it but very slightly in the ensuing books."[I]

So, although Lavinia was the next spouse of Aeneas, there is little of the love interest woven into her story. Mackail has summed up her characterization as follows:

"Lavinia, the young princess, who carried the Italian kingdom as her dowry, is slightly drawn, and kept deliberately in the background."[II] "Lavinia is described by images suggestive of beauty, and of a delicate nature: - 'mixta rubent ubi lilia multa alba rosa' -- 'Where the white lillies blush with the mingling of many roses.'"[III] In Lavinia's case, we have the "mother- daughter"complex. Lavinia has no will of her own. She is dominated by her mother. She is the "Yes, Mother," type. Being beautiful and a princess, she had many suitors, Her mother had picked out the one whom she wished her to marry, and as far as Lavinia was concerned, that settled it. And so we begin to see the type of woman the mother, Amata, was. She was the "rule or ruin" kind.

I - Ker. Essays of Dryden - p. 190
II - Mackail - Virgil, - p. 107
III - Sellar - The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age - p. 400.

Amata was successful in ruling her daughter, but when thwarted by her husband, she exhibited a sort of blind animal rage, and fled to the woods, taking Lavinia with her. She aroused all the other matrons, and arrayed them on her side, and led them in a bacchanal revel. She stopped at nothing to gain her point. Lavinia was to marry Turnus, or she'd know the reason why. When she heard that Turnus had fallen in battle, and her hopes were dashed, she hanged herself.[I] Hers was a compelling and vigorous personality, but her energy was wrongly expended, on the losing side.

Lastly, we have Camilla, a rather more attractive figure. "In the episode of Camilla, Vergil brings another female figure into the front plane of action. She is unique, and alone . . . . . and Vergil lavishes his art on the portrait of the terrible maiden, bellatrix ('soldieress,' is the fine Shakespearian word), who from infancy has lived among the lonely hills. . . . . with rivers and forests for her companions, in a fierce and flawless virginity! His treatment here allows him to give full scope to romance, and to bring the essence of pastoral beauty into the august field of the epic."[II]

For Camilla was a child reared by a stern father, away from every feminine influence, in the lonely mountains. In her infancy, he had dedicated her to Diana. "And soon as the child first stood upon her feet, he armed her hands with

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I - Aeneid - Bk. XII - line 603
II - Mackail - Virgil - pp. 107-108

a pointed javelin, and hung from her baby shoulders a quiver and a bow ..... Even then she launched with tiny hands her childish missiles, swung around her head the sling's well turned thong, and brought down a crane from Strymon, or a snow white swan. Many a mother in Tyrrhene town had wooed her for her son in vain. With no thought but for Diana, she cherishes in unsullied purity her love for the hunter's and the maiden's life."[I]

Responding to Turnus' call for forces to meet the Trojan invaders, Camilla comes to the field with her warrior maidens. Vergil's picture of her during the conflict is given in the lines:

"At medias inter caedes exsultat Amazon
unum exserta latus pugnae, pharetrata Camilla,
et nunc lenta manu spargens hastilia denset,
nunc validam dextra rapit indefessa bipennem;
aureus ex umero sonat arcus et arma Dianae."[II]

Camilla was so remarkable for her swiftness that she is described as flying over the corn without bending the stalks, and skimming over the surface of the water without wetting her feet. Perhaps from this, Scott received the notion which he incorporated in his "Lady of the Lake."

"A foot more light, a step more true,
Ne'er from the heath-flower dashed the dew;

I - Aeneid - Bk. XI - lines 573-584 - trans. by Conington
II - " " XI - " 648-652 - " " "

"E'en the slight harebell raised its head
Elastic from her airy tread."

Vergil likens Camilla and her chosen band to the Amazons of Thrace. This shows up his source for the creation of this masculine heroine, the young Amazon whom he likened to Penthesilea or Hippolyte of mythological origin.

Hyginus, who wrote fables from mythology, gives us in Fable CLXIII, a list of names of Amazons, fifteen in all, -- of whom the most notable are Hippolyte and Penthesilea. In Fable XXX, he writes of the twelve labors of Hercules -- one of which -- "Hippolyten Amazonam, Martis et Otrerae reginae filiam: cui reginae Amazonis balteum detraxit, tum Antiopam Captivam Theseo donavit."[II]

In Fable CXII, he mentions Penthesilea: "idem (meaning Achilles) cum Penthesilea Amazone Martis et Otrerae filia; Penthesilea occiditur."[III]

The myth of the Amazons seemed to be very popular with the ancients. "Die Amazonen sind für die Alten ein ethnologischer Begriff, ein Menschenstamm aus der Fremde, mit Eigenschaften und Sitten, die der griechischen Nation fremd und ungewöhnt waren. . . . . Als Hauptstadt der Amazonen wird gewöhnlich Themiskyra am Thermodon genannt."[IV]

I - Hyginus - p. 138
II - " - " 42
III - " - " 101
IV - Pauly - Wissowa: Real Encylopadie der Classische Altertumswissenschaft. Vol. I - pp. 1754-1766

Vergil makes use of this myth to draw the warrior maiden, Camilla, and her band:

"Quales Threïciae cum flumina Thermodontis
pulsant et pictis bellantur Amazones armis,
seu circum Hippolyten, seu cum se Martia curru
Penthesilea refert . . . . . ."[I]

Roscher says: -

"Vergil Aen. XI. 661 erwähnt ihren Streitwagen; sonst ist es allgemeine Uberlieferung, dasz sie reitet." .....

"Sie kommt Priamos nach Hecktor's Tode zu Hilfe, Kämpft zuerst siegreich, tötet Poderkes, wird dann aber von Achill besiegt."[II]

Ovid, almost contemporary with Vergil, uses the names "Penthesilea" and "Hippolyte" in the Heroides XXI, line 118, in the letter from Cydippe to Acontius.

Vergil, earlier in the Aeneid, (Bk. I, l. 491), mentions Penthesilea and uses the epithet "bellatrix" in the line: "Bellatrix, audetque viris concurrere, virgo." (l. 493).

The Amazons of mythology, although they renounced the weakness of their sex, still could not compete successfully against man's superior prowess as a warrior; - so Hippolyte was conquered by Hercules; Penthesilea was killed by Achilles; and Camilla, too, was slain by a man; although for a long time, for

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I - Aeneid - Bk. XI - l. 659-662.
II - W. H. Roscher: Mythologisches Lexikon, Vol. III (Penthesileia)

every dart she launched from her maiden hand, there fell a Phrygian warrior. She had a pride in herself and her victories. In slaying Ornytus she boasted, "Yet no slight glory shall you carry down to your father's shades that you have fallen by the dart of Camilla."[I] It wasn't vain boasting, it was rather a self-assurance which was merited from the training which had made her such a valiant warrior maiden. When she addressed herself to Turnus, her words were:

"Turne, sui merito, si qua est fiducia forti,
audeo et Aeneadum promitto occurrere turmae."[II]

Vergil pays tribute to her prowess in the line,
"deiecta crudescit pugna Camilla."[III]

"Camilla, the only woman on the field of battle, ----- revels in the fight, is swift of foot, tireless, determined, ---- without suspicion of treachery, even in death undismayed and devoted to duty. Her prowess is best shown from the fact that her enemies do not dare to meet her in open combat; one seeks to escape her by treachery, the other kills her from behind, and does not venture to approach her, even after she has become struck down. But in all her heroism, she remains a woman, and a woman's weakness brings on her death; in her desire for the splendid trappings of Chloreus, she forgets everything about her, and falls a prey to her hidden foe, who had long sought in vain a vulnerable spot; so blinded

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I - Aeneid - Bk. XI - l. 688-689 - trans by Conington
II - " - " XI - " 501-502 -
III - " - " XI - " 833 -

is she by the object of her pursuit that she alone does not see the fatal spear hurled at her; her faithful Volscians see the harm coming and cannot protect her; she falls into the arms of her companion."[I]

Still, her last thought was for the battle. With her dying breath, she addresses her closest friend, Acca:-

"'Thus far, sister Acca, has strength been given me; now the cruel wound overcomes me; and all around me grows dim and dark. Haste to carry to Turnus my dying charge,-- to take my place in the battle and keep the Trojans from the town. And now, farewell!' As she spoke, she dropped the bridle, swimming down to earth with no willing act."[II]

"The romantic career of Camilla interests us; and she has the further attraction to modern readers of reminding them of a martial heroine of actual history."[III]

We glory in Camilla, in her splendid rashness, even though it brought her doom, (which was speedily avenged by Diana); we cannot help having a thrill at her sublime courage. She is one of those characters that stand alone, -- little interested in others, self-centered, perhaps, but not selfish; indifferent alike to fame and fortune, but gloriously alive, and one who enjoyed being in the thick of things. We cannot help liking and admiring her.

I - Prescott - The Development of Virgil's Art - p. 471.
II - Aeneid - Bk. XI - lines 823-828 - trans. by Conington.
III - Sellar - The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age - p. 401.

SUMMARY

This year is the Vergil Bimillennium; and all over the world, people renew their reading of Vergil's works to honor him during this anniversary year. I have taken for my subject, "The Women Characters in Vergil's Works," drawing my material from his three chief works, "The Bucolics," "The Georgics," and "The Aeneid." "The Bucolics," are ten short poems, modelled largely on the Greek pastoral poetry of Theocritus. Their origin is to be traced to that love of music and song which is developed by the ease and happiness of a shepard's existence in a southern clime. The woman element is very slightly developed. The women characters are buxom country lasses, or fair shepherdesses. Here are also brought in frequent pictures of the nymphs and graces. The women are the picturesque type, more a part of the scenery than realistic.

In the Georgics we are given a Treatise on Husbandry, consisting of four books, as follows: The Care of the Soil, The Care of the Vine, The Care of Cattle, and The Care of Bees. The model here was Hesiod. In these Georgics Vergil glorifies labor. Women play almost no part here. We have merely the mention of the farmer's wife, busily engaged in the household tasks, spending the long winter evenings carding wool, or boiling down the sweet must, and skimming it with leaves while the husband sits by fashioning stakes, or

weaving baskets. It is only as a real help-mate to her husband that woman figures in this series.

We have now to consider the Aeneid in which Vergil does his best character portrayal. Here he has given us pictures of Helen of Troy; Creüsa, (wife of Aeneas); Dido, the Carthaginian - Oriental queen; Lavinia, the rich young princess; Amata, her dominating mother; and Camilla, soldieress. "Dido is by far the most completely drawn woman character in any of Vergil's works, and Vergil emphasizes in his portrayal, the character at once of a fond woman and an Oriental queen."..... "The splendid passage (Bk. IV - 305-372) which describes the final interview between Aeneas and the queen is a masterpiece. To an appeal, which would move a stone, Aeneas replies with the cold and formal rhetoric of an attorney. Then Dido bursts into an invective, which, for concentrated scorn, nervous force, and tragic grandeur, is almost unequalled."[I]

Prescott's criticisms of Vergil's character portrayals, is that Vergil is intent upon general traits of character, qualities common in groups, distinctions of age and sex, rather than upon precise individualization. But he explains the reason for this in the following paragraphs:

"The relative neglect of individualization in ancient literature is mainly a reflection of contemporary social conditions. The so-called "city-state," contrary to most

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I - Page, Virgil. Aeneid, I-VI. Introduction, p.XVIII.

modern organizations, emphasizes the complete absorption of the individual in the large corporation.

"The point which literary art had attained before Virgil's day may be further illustrated by two academic discussions of character treatment; the comments of Aristotle in some of his essays, and Horace's poem on the art of poetry. Aristotle evidently regards character as involving moral qualities, and distinguishes between general and individual characterization, emphasizing the latter; Horace, on the contrary, enlarges upon general characterization and disposes of individualization very briefly. What these authorities mean by general and special characterization is clear enough. General characterization amounts simply to representing, for example, old men and young men as being different from each other without distinguishing one individual young man from another; so women must have qualities different from those of men, and Greeks must not resemble Italians.

"It is from the standpoint of this ancient theory, with its emphasis upon general characterization, that we may best understand Virgil's achievement in the delineation of persons in his poem. The sum and substance of what we shall now illustrate in some detail is that Virgil, in portraying his characters, emphasizes general traits of character rather than individual qualities; there lies his weakness from a modern standpoint; yet within this broad description of his art we must leave room for a

certain amount of clear individualism, and notably in the cases of several of the warriors of the last six books.

"Virgil represents, on the whole, a rather high degree of accomplishment if one considers the artistic ideals of his day."[I]

Sellar seems to have expressed almost the same idea: "Creüsa, Anna (and Andromache), are vague impersonations of womanly tenderness and fidelity of affection."[II] But to conclude, let me quote the opinion expressed in Crutwell's summary. "Camilla is perhaps original; Amata and (Juturna) belong to the class 'virago', a term applied to the latter by Virgil himself.[III] Lavinia is the modest maiden, a sketch, not a portrait. Dido is a character for all time, the 'chef d'oeure' of the Aeneid."[IV]

I was recommended to use D. A. Slater's "Sortes Vergilianae," but it seems irrevelant to the subject of my thesis. I have read the lecture through several times and consider it a beautiful tribute to Vergil and his works, but to apply in general to the men characters of Vergil, rather than the women.

It is full of fine sentiments taken from many of Vergil's half lines as they have become the watchwords, and the mottoes of great schools and great institutions and many lines which have been used as oracles (for that is, of course, the meaning of the term "Sortes Vergilianae").

I - Prescott - The Development of Virgil's Art - p.466
II - Sellar - The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age - p. 400
IV - Crutwell - History of Roman Literature, - p. 272
III - Aeneid - XII, p. 468.

"Virgil is a master spirit, whom to have known and loved is in itself a liberal education; whose voice -- after neneteen centuries --has lost nothing of its ancient resonance and perennial charm."[I]

"'Great words in the memory furnish' (it has been said) 'one of the best hopes for great aspirations in life.' Happy the man who goes through life with 'Sortes Vergilianae' ringing in his mind, eternal verities in immortal verse. They will be to him so many talismans against the deadly and devastating materialism, which seems to be settling like a blight on the world of today."[II]

I - D. A. Slater - Sortes Vergilianae - p. 5

II - D. A. Slater - " " - p. 24

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